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Perspectives

Oregon Daily
Emerald

CAMPAIGN *clean-up*

Election season is upon us again. Brace yourselves. Because if years past give us any indication, then elections can get pretty messy. Grievances. Accusations of unfairness. And, of course, posters being put over other peoples' posters in a most immature fashion.

It seems that no matter who the candidates are — or even what the quality of their platforms are — that elections are showcases of rude behavior and finger pointing.

New year. New century. New election. New attitude.

Even though the gauntlet has been thrown down — one grievance filed, one campaign-spending challenge made — there's still time to have a good, clean and fair election. The first order of business, then, is the grievances. While many grievances in the

elections process are fair, the tone in which they are presented or the subjects of them are often quite petty. So what if someone postered over your posters? Their actions were wrong, but filing a formal grievance really slows the elections process. A better remedy would be to talk to the ASUO Elections Board or, better yet, to talk to the offending candidate or ticket.

It seems a lot of problems like that can be solved through communication rather than through litigation. If serious candidates want to run a serious election, and if students are paying attention to which candidates are following the rules, it's in everyone's best interest to follow the rules and to discuss problems that come up.

Also, candidates can even discuss potential problems in advance. Earlier this week, ASUO Executive candidate Autumn De Poe announced that she and her running mate, Caitlin Upshaw, would be spending only \$20 on their campaign. While there are no limits to what a candidate or tickets can spend — although limits for donations by groups do exist — the use of exorbitant amounts of money does unfairly taint an election.

We've seen concern over campaign finance in the general presidential elections for the nation, and it's true that money can buy more advertising, more campaign buttons and more posters. But deep pockets aren't always successful. Just witness the exit of national presidential candidate Steve Forbes on Wednesday. His money, \$66 million dollars of it, couldn't buy him the voters' attention to his message. While we don't necessarily recommend limiting campaign spending to \$20, the spirit of De Poe's challenge was in keeping with a fair and equal election.

And we know that quite serious problems or grievances could arise. Of course, they should be taken care of with the utmost seriousness. The issue we are speaking to is when those grievances and problems get so out of control that the election is more about who is found guilty of wrongdoing than who is good for the students.

That hurts everyone.

Money doesn't always bring success. And whining won't generally get you anywhere. Keep those in mind when observing all the candidates this election season. And candidates, let's see a clean, even election. Good luck to all.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.



Giovanni Salimena

Giovanni Salimena Emerald

Letters to the editor

Emerald lacking material

I would like to thank the Emerald for the wonderful article by Sridevi Palanivelu ("Oregon springs pinpoint lava flow," ODE Feb. 4). I have been dismayed with the lack of educational articles since I entered the University this winter. I read the Emerald often, and so far there have been little more than the stories involving ASUO or Programs Finance Committee squabbles and athletic events. Both of these I understand are important, but it often feels as though the newspaper is just filling space. (Who really cares that the student government turned down plans for an on-campus beer garden?) If the Emerald is lacking material, just look around; I'm sure many of the departments could provide similar success stories as those mentioned by Palanivelu. There is great pride in learning about the academic accomplishments of my fellow students in this place of higher learning.

Seraph S. Cortez
post baccalaureate

Defining diversity

How does a person measure diversity? And if diversity can be measured what elements are being taken into consideration? Does the University have a problem with diversity? What exactly does this

mean? In recent Emerald articles, the University has been attacked for its lack of diversity. Is there a lack of ethnic representation on campus? By examining the last names of the two ASUO Executives, I can infer that they are of different ethnicities. Is this lack of representation? The University has many fine language departments. It has departments for the further exploration of different genders, sexual persuasion and ethnicity. The University sponsors numerous clubs that provide the opportunity to promote healthy interaction on campus. Do other major universities offer these same opportunities in such abundance for minority representation? I might suggest that we start praising the University for its efforts to allow everyone to have a forum to self-promote. Please, let the Emerald stop with these generalizations about the state of the University and write about something more specific and not so vague.

Paul Horsell
journalism/business

Candidates should be heard

Admittedly, I don't understand the specifics of election regulations. But, it seems ridiculous and not in the University's best interests to penalize candidates for "attempting to influence the outcome of an election" (ODE, Feb. 9).

That, to me, could mean two things: bribing —

and no bribes were taken at Coffee Hour since food is offered indiscriminately to anyone and talking about positions — and why shouldn't candidates talk about their positions? Should they be silent? Don't students need to be influenced by candidates? Shouldn't we, as voters, "influence the outcome of the election" by voting for the candidates who are most qualified? And how do we voters know who is most qualified if candidates don't attempt to influence our decision by talking about their positions?

I would like to penalize all candidates who are "not attempting to influence the outcome of the election." C.J. Gabbe and Peter Larson seem to be concerned that students hear about their positions — and also that international students are taken into consideration.

I only found out about Gabbe's and Larson's positions at Coffee Hour — and I bet that was the first time for many international students too. I hope Jay Breslow and Holly Magner will come to Coffee Hour so we can hear from them as well.

Gabbe and Larson ended their brief discussion at Coffee Hour by encouraging students to inform themselves about all candidates and to vote. Not to vote for them, but to vote, period. And that's an influence that should definitely affect "the outcome of the election."

James Pippin
University student

THE WEEK IN THUMBS



To a "queer" kind of diversity

The University's Queer Film Festival began Thursday. Check out movies that wouldn't necessarily show up on the big screen, and learn a little about all kinds of different people.

To free soda

Kudos to the Baptist Student Union, which gave away free soda in the EMU on Wednesday. They just asked people to smile and then handed them a frosty beverage. The nice gesture brightened up a few people's days and proved you can get something for nothing.



To hack, hack, hacking away

The same group of hackers apparently sabotaged the Web sites of Ebay, Yahoo, Buy.com, E-Trade, Amazon and other top-name companies this week. The U.S. Justice Department still has not found a motive for the hacking, and there are no suspects.

To carelessness

The new University homepage debuted this week, and one of the new features is a "featured Web site of the day." Unfortunately, one of those first featured sites was that of the Collier House and Clancy Thurber's Bistro, the campus restaurants that closed last term. Oops.